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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CVIS](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: FAMILY DECRIES POOR MEDICAL TREATMENT OF ARIEL
SIGLER AMAYA AND SEEKS HUMANITARIAN VISA

Classified By: COM: Jonathan Farrar for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Family members of political prisoner and 75er Ariel Sigler Amaya are concerned that his health is declining rapidly and that the GOC is unable or unwilling or both to provide him with adequate medical care. They are urging that USINT issue him an NIV on humanitarian grounds so that he can obtain adequate medical treatment in the U.S. Though USINT has no way to make direct contact with Ariel Sigler Amaya, we have no reason to doubt the reports of his health problems. However, unless the GOC is willing to release him from custody and provide him an exit permit, we do not see any way that we could grant him a visa. Doing so could also set off a clamor for similar visas for the 20 or so other political prisoners who are reportedly in equally bad shape. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Pol-Econ chief spoke on June 30 and July 1 with Juan Francisco Sigler Amaya and Noelia Pedraza, the brother and wife of political prisoner Ariel Sigler Amaya. Both reported that Ariel Sigler Amaya's health has declined rapidly of late. He has been unable to work and confined to a wheel chair for at least nine months, apparently because of circulatory problems in his feet and ankles. In addition, he suffers from multiple maladies of skin, mouth, and kidneys, which also appear to be related to circulatory problems.

¶3. (SBU) In February, Ariel Sigler Amaya was transferred from his prison cell to the Carlos Finlay military hospital in Havana. While he was there, his wife Noelia Pedraza and several other of the Damas de Blanco mounted a protest outside that hospital demanding his release on humanitarian grounds. The protest resulted in some rough treatment of the Damas by the police and their brief detention. By April, military doctors determined that they could not identify the source of Ariel Sigler Amaya's medical problems and therefore declared him fit and sent him back to his regular prison cell. There his condition apparently worsened and, according to his brother Juan Francisco, he was transferred to the prison wing of the provincial hospital in Cienfuegos under strict guard. Aside from one visit from his mother, Ariel Sigler Amaya has not been permitted visits from family members. Wife Noelia Pedraza is at the hospital also, but has not been allowed to see him. (Note: Pedraza is not on speaking terms with the rest of the Sigler Amaya family and they are not coordinating activities.)

¶4. (SBU) During his conversation with Pol-Econ Chief, Juan Francisco Sigler Amaya argued forcefully that the GOC was making no attempt to find out what was wrong with his brother and treat it properly. He said he feared Ariel could die in a few weeks without improved treatment. He said the Sigler Amaya family wanted USINT to issue Ariel Sigler Amaya an NIV on humanitarian grounds so that he could go to the U.S. for medical treatment. Juan Francisco Sigler Amaya acknowledged that the GOC had given no inkling of an intention to grant Ariel Sigler Amaya a conditional release on medical grounds, nor that it would be willing to grant him an exit permit (tarjeta blanca) if it were to do so.

15. (C) COMMENT: USINT cannot confirm independently the status of Ariel Sigler Amaya's health, but we have no reason to doubt the reports we are getting from his family members. However, unless the GOC takes the first step by granting Ariel Sigler Amaya a conditional release based on his need for medical treatment, we cannot initiate the process of issuing him a visa. If Ariel Sigler Amaya were to be released we could certainly consider his eligibility for a visa on humanitarian grounds. There are at least 20 other political prisoners who also are reported to be in failing health. Given the publicity developing outside of Cuba on the state of Ariel Sigler Amaya's health, it would not be too far out of character for the GOC to suggest that it might be willing to allow him and his family to depart permanently, especially if the USG were willing to reciprocate by releasing some or all of the Cuban five. End comment.
FARRAR